

Natural Communion

*Poems and paintings about our human inclusion in
the evolutionary flow of place-time*

By Alan Rayner

PREVIEW

In March 1999, I suffered a mental breakthrough. Tensions that had been storing up inside me throughout my career in biological science, as a university teacher and researcher, could no longer be borne. I realized that the way I was expected – and expected myself – to work in this role was deeply at odds with the way I actually understood and loved the natural world. It was also at odds with my personal sense of vulnerability and fallibility as a knowledgeable and imaginative but by no means autonomous human being. I felt like some desperately flailing insect caught up in a terrible web of pretence, and my much polished veneer of professional confidence disintegrated into a myriad splinters.

As I endeavoured to work my way through this situation I continued, with the help of a few like-minded others, to try to deepen my understanding of the practice and philosophy of science in an effort to uncover the roots of my tensions. I found that these roots lay not in the honest endeavour to observe and interpret nature impartially, but in the conflation of this endeavour with an archaic logic and objective methodology that is profoundly partial in the way it simplistically rationalizes natural processes into discrete intervals of space and time.

Despite the claims of its advocates to the contrary, objective logic and methodology is not based rigorously on evidence but on lazy presupposition – the notion that matter and space are mutually exclusive, such that nature can

be conveniently subdivided into definable, independently quantifiable entities. The assumption that these entities can only be removed from their present position or linear trajectory by external force, which is enshrined in Newtonian mechanics and Darwinian selection theory, neither takes account of nor does justice to contemporary scientific findings. It is a source of profound paradox, which arises ultimately from the impossibility of defining infinity within a fixed-centred, 3-dimensional box populated by vacuum-packed independent objects acting and reacting in equal and opposite measure. It is also a source of the deep human distress and conflict that comes from striving for individual or group supremacy in flagrant denial of the natural receptivity – the loving influence – of our common space. This is the receptive influence that opens us all to the possibility of living a loving, creative and vulnerable life but goes absent without leave from the positivistic and misogynistic notion of the material occupation of space that sustains all kinds of tyranny.

This book unfolds the story of an ever-deepening sense of **natural communion**, as it emerged when previously well-hidden qualities within me came out into the open and expressed themselves in paintings and poems, alongside my philosophical enquiries. This communion is implicit in the fluid dynamic continuity of all locally manifest form as receptive-responsive flow-form, pooled together in the non-local presence – which may be comprehended as a divine spiritual omnipresence – of space everywhere, throughout Nature as All. Put more succinctly, *natural communion is the dynamic continuity of all Nature in receptive spatial context*. Here ‘self-identity’ arises in the context of, and not – as objective logic makes believe – as an exception from its natural neighbourhood.

Correspondingly, the contemplation of a starry night, a tempestuous sea, a swirling river and a vibrant forest all bring a profound sense of awe and belonging that is both exhilarating and comforting, not adverse as in the Darwinian depiction of life as a 'struggle for existence'. We understand our selves fluidly, as responsive receptacles of energy flow, whirls within whirls, not independent performing objects fighting for dear life, like Shakespeare's Hamlet, against a sea of troubles.

We do not deny our experience of suffering, but neither do we find this experience a just cause to oppose and seek to bring to an end whatever enemy we might otherwise blame as its source. We seek healing, protection and transformation, not extermination. In so far as is possible, we avoid, resist and resolve trouble.

We do not set out to make trouble, because we appreciate that whatever appears to lie beyond our bodily boundaries is spatially continuous with and vital in one way and another to whatever lives within and permeates through them. What truly makes trouble is what defines itself by what it is not, against the flow, like C.S. Lewis's fictional devil, 'Screwtape', who declared that 'the *whole* philosophy of Hell rests on a recognition of the axiom that one thing is not another thing, and, specifically, that one self is not another self.

The sense of natural communion and immanent divinity of 'self as neighbourhood' itself arose from my intensive ongoing enquiry with others into forms of understanding that we came to refer to as **inclusional** and **natural**

inclusion. These understandings transform the logic of mutual exclusion and competitive evolutionary processes into the logic of mutual inclusion and co-creativity. They subsume what has been called ‘the law of the excluded middle’, the axiom that one thing is not another thing, into the logic of the included middle, in which every transient local form is a dynamic inclusion of all space, and hence every other transient form, everywhere.

Correspondingly, inclusionality can be described, but not defined, as *a comprehension of nature as a fluid continuum of mutually inclusive informational (material) and spatial (immaterial) phases in which all form is flow-form, a dynamic receptive-responsive configuration of ‘everywhere’ in ‘somewhere’, with no fixed centre.* Natural inclusion is *the co-creative, fluid dynamic transformation of all through all in receptive spatial context.* The fundamental geometry of nature is understood to be fluid, an evolutionary geometry of ‘place-time’. It is not a fixed Euclidean or non-Euclidean geometry confined respectively within a three-dimensional box of homogenized space and time, or the curved surface of an elastic sheet of space-time envisaged in Einstein’s (but not Henri Poincaré’s) version of relativity theory. It is a never-complete geometry of ‘nested holeyness’ that dynamically encompasses microcosm in macrocosm and vice versa, not a finalized geometry of completely definitive wholeness.

The Hole in the Mole

I **AM** the hole

That **lives** in a mole

That **induces** the mole

To dig the hole
That moves the mole
Through the earth
That forms a hill
That becomes a mountain
That reaches to sky
That connects with stars
And brings the rain
That the mountain collects
Into streams and rivers
That moisten the earth
That grows the grass
That freshens the air
That condenses to rain
That carries the water
That brings the mole
To Life



"The hole in the mole" By Alan Rayner, Oil on Canvas, 2001

On Being a Hermit Crab

Oh, What Hell
To Be
In a Shell!
It's So Unkind
To Be So Confined
With No Room To Move
Or Get Into The Groove
This Inner Space
Is Such a DisGrace
I Gotta Get Outta This Place!

I'll Squeeze Through The Gap
Out Into The Light
Oh, But It's Much Too Bright!
And My Body's Pap!
It's Not So Cool
To Be In This Pool

There's a Hole New World Out Here
And It Makes Me Feel Queer!
Perhaps It Might Be As Well
To Be In a Shell
Where I Won't Feel Bare
Look! There's One Over There!

So, What the Hell
I'll Be Me In a Shell!



"On being a hermit crab", by Alan Rayner

Odd Lemming Out

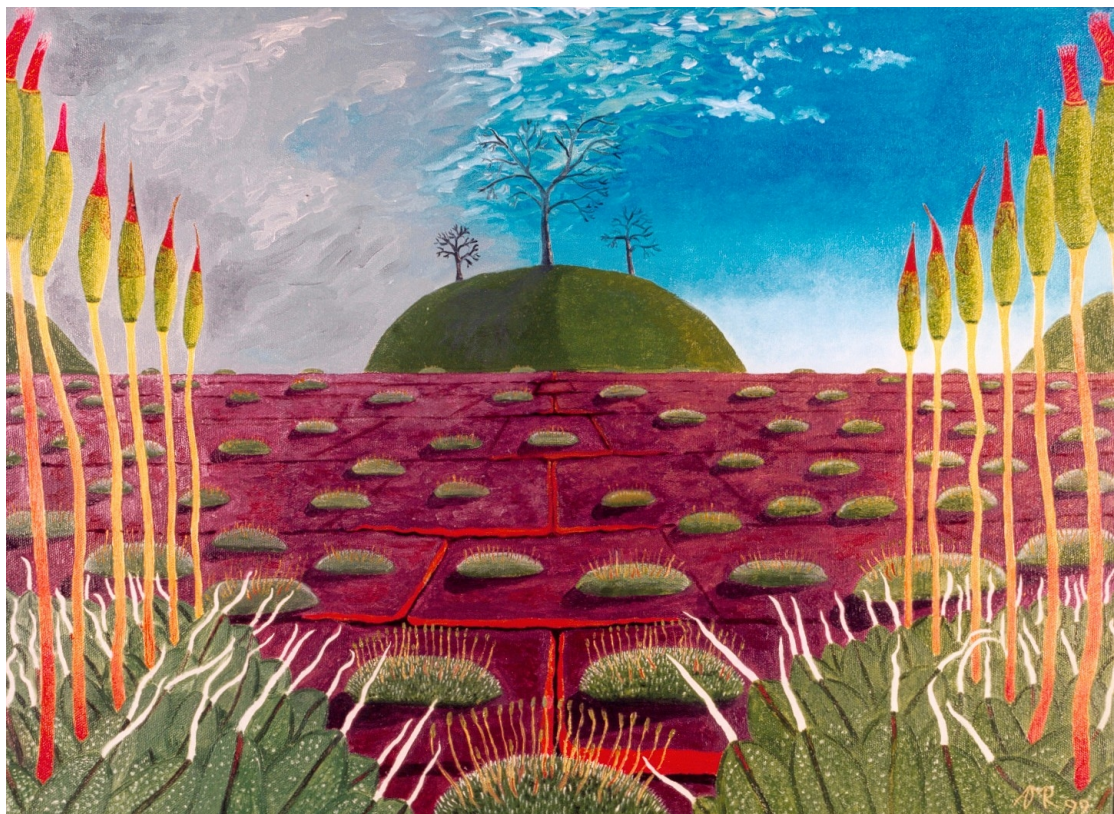
I had a dream
To leave the mainstream
And pawsed to rest
Upon this hill crest
Where I gained a view
That I thought no body knew

I tried to tell
That they were heading for Hell
But, they said, 'what cheek
To pronounce from your peak'

Those who came nearest
Said I was the queerest
Unfeeling sub-lemming
Not allowed
To depart from the crowd

They said, 'not to be dim'
To 'be in with the swim'
But when I refused
They were not amused

They tied me down
And pierced my hide
And left me to die
As they rushed for the sky



***'Tortuous Advance'** (Oil painting on canvas, by Alan Rayner, 1999).*

Recreations of a Playful Universe

Oh, how we laugh!
When Some Thing
Touches Our Spirit
Tickles Our Imagination
Recalling Our Place
In a Playful Space

A common enjoyment
Of a Common Enjoinment
Recreations
Of an Ever Present
Folding

Dynamic Boundaries
Pivotal Places
Incomplete Surfaces
That make distinct
But Never Discrete

Unique and Special Identities
Possibilities Realized
That Can Never Be Bettered
And can never be Severed
From a Context Within and Beyond
That Makes Us Content
Belonging Together
Adoring Our Differences
Inseparable in Our Incompleteness

Our Self-Insufficiency
That Unites Us in Love
A Receptive Space

A No Thing Place
That Keeps Us Coherent
Within and Without
Enveloped and Enveloping

No Need For Rules
No Need For Rulers
With Space in Our Hearts
To Include Other as Us
A Diverse Assembly
A Joyous Relief
Reciprocating Each Other's Movements
Dancing in High Spirits

Oh, how we cry!
When Made To Deny
Our Union With Other
No Mother, No Brother
No Sister
To Assist
Our Passage
Through Pain

But a Father Severe
A Tyrant Authority
To Cut Us Off
Within Fixed Boundaries
In Isolation

Pretending Independence
Making Comparisons
Striving To Remove
What's Not Good Enough

In Pursuit of Perfection, Control, Prediction

A rationalistic Ideal

A Uniform Whole

A Self-Sufficiency

Tolerating No Hole

No Breathing Space

No Place for Grace

Demanding Reproduction

More of the Same

A Perpetual Cloning

With No Room to Err

No Room to Wander or Wonder

A Solid Object

With Space Outcast

An Infinite Outsider

Offering No Possibility

Of Excitement or Joy

A Purified Presence

A Divine Right

Freed From Wrong

An Unreal Abstraction

Motionless

Emotionless

Random Disunity

Divine DisContent

A Need For Rules

A Need For Rulers

No Space in Our Hearts

To Include Other as Us

A Monoculture
A Dull, Flat Field
Where Conflict Abounds

So, For Heaven's Sake, Father!
Take a Look at Your Wife!
Isn't She Sexy?
Get a Life!
Be Your Self!
Give Us Guidelines, By All Means
But, Please
Don't Hold Us Against Them

Stop Repeating Yourself!
Put Away Your Severing Knife!
Or, at the very least
Make a Hole that Heals
And Recreates -
Lets Us Play!



'Recreations' (Oil painting on canvas, by Alan Rayner, 2004).

Breathing Space

Spring Is
In spring
New leaves open
Stomatal windows to sky
Sand Martins swirl down from migration
Towards water
Egrets flutter past

A white-ribbed Silver Birch
Rooted to rocky diaphragm
Transforms crimson lung-branches
Into leaves

Coral bark fires imagination
Pussy Willow erupts
into incandescent catkins
Blackthorn snow-storms
Lichens pulsate
With their own slow rhythm

Space moves within
And without
The embodied water flows of life

In, out
together
to gather

Implicit Human Being
In Formational Lining
Attuned



'Breathing Space' (By Alan Rayner, Oil on Canvas, 2002).

Landed, Stranded

A reflection upon the evolutionary inversion from aquatic to terrestrial
life

I used to be
Within the Sea
An identity
Of You and Me
Submerged
In Commonality
Of Sounding
Between Airy Heights
And Bottom Depths
Waving Correspondence
Through Inseparable Togetherness
Of Content with Context

But, Now,
Dry
Abstracted
Space comes between Us
A separating distance
An unbecoming Outside
Alienating Forms
As Fixtures
Stranded in Isolation
Entities
Non-identities
Conflicting
Oblivious of Our Belonging
Together

Oxygen

Now, moving Fast
Not Languidly
Tans our Hides
Protecting Our Inner Spaces
Against its own
Consuming Presence
Supporting Combustion
Burning Us Out

But all this sealing
Removes Our Feeling
Setting Our Content
At Odds with Our Context
So that we push
Against the Pull
With Backs to Front
Itching to Relieve
Unbearable Friction

And So Now
Just Let's Go
And, with Loving Fear
Dive into the Clear
And Swim Where it's Cool
To be In With the Pool
Together



'Landed, Stranded' (Oil painting on canvas by Alan Rayner, 2004).

The War of the Pots and Kettles

Black You ARE
AND Black you BE
What ever ELSE
YOU cannot be ME

Whiter than white
And purer than pure
I KNOW what's RIGHT
That's my ALLURE

But, How can YOU BE
So very SURE
About what you perceive
as YOUR allure?

So CONFIDENT
In the RULE of LAW
That you can flout it
Whenever your bent
Is to BE without it

YOU think you're so BRAVE
To call ME DEPRAVED
As you parade your virtue
Symbolized by your STATUE
Of LIBERTY

An OxyMoron
A Freedom you lost
Because of its cost

You think Economics

IS Ergonomics
But YOUR Economics
Is Egonomics

A self-righteous assertion
That leads to Desertion
Of your human nature
In which we so long
To Belong

So, let's bury the hatchet
There's no THING to match it
A celebration of DIFFERENCE
And no indifference

No grayness
No blameness
But a splash of colour
Of every hue
Not black and blue

That's me and you



'The War of the Pots and Kettles' (Oil painting on canvas by Alan Rayner, 2004).

Sphagnum Moss

A labyrinthine network
Of Life
In a matrix of death

A close interdependence
Of One with the Other
Fills Like a Sponge
With Water
Or Blood

Cushioning
Soothing
Healing
Filtering

Raising Ground out of Water
For others to root in
Building on the Backs
Of past endeavours

Death Feeds Life
In a succession
Of amplifying Diversity

But a distanced humanity
Walled Into Itself
Feeds Death With Life



'Sphagnum Moss' (By Alan Rayner, Oil on Canvas, 2003).

Space - Your Final Dissolution

I am your final dissolution
The nurturer of your nature
That soothes and softens
As we live and breathe together

No gas-tight chamber doors
Designed to wall in
Or wall out your fears of devastation
Can exterminate me

You cannot live without me
You cannot die without me
I cannot find expression without you
You live in the breath of my inspiration
You die in the breath of my expiration
You die as you live
You live as you die
With me
Within and without

So, if you try to close me in
Or close me out
In your Manly human quest for Godly immortality
I cannot love you as you stir within my womb

I cannot assist you
I can only watch, impassively by
As you use me to destroy
Yourself
Or suffocate in the stasis
Of a never-ending, never-opening

Paralysis
That's no life for any one of us
Alone

So, please, bear with me
As I am alongside and within you
Take me in as I take you out
Certain only of the uncertainty
That recreates a rich and vibrant world
I am what life *and* death is all about

Rising and subsiding
In ever-flowing form
Living Light and Loving Darkness
Together

Starlings – Revelations of Invisibility

Smoke Rises
In Bird Form
Lining Pockets of Air

Horizontal Aspirations
To Vertex
From Vortex

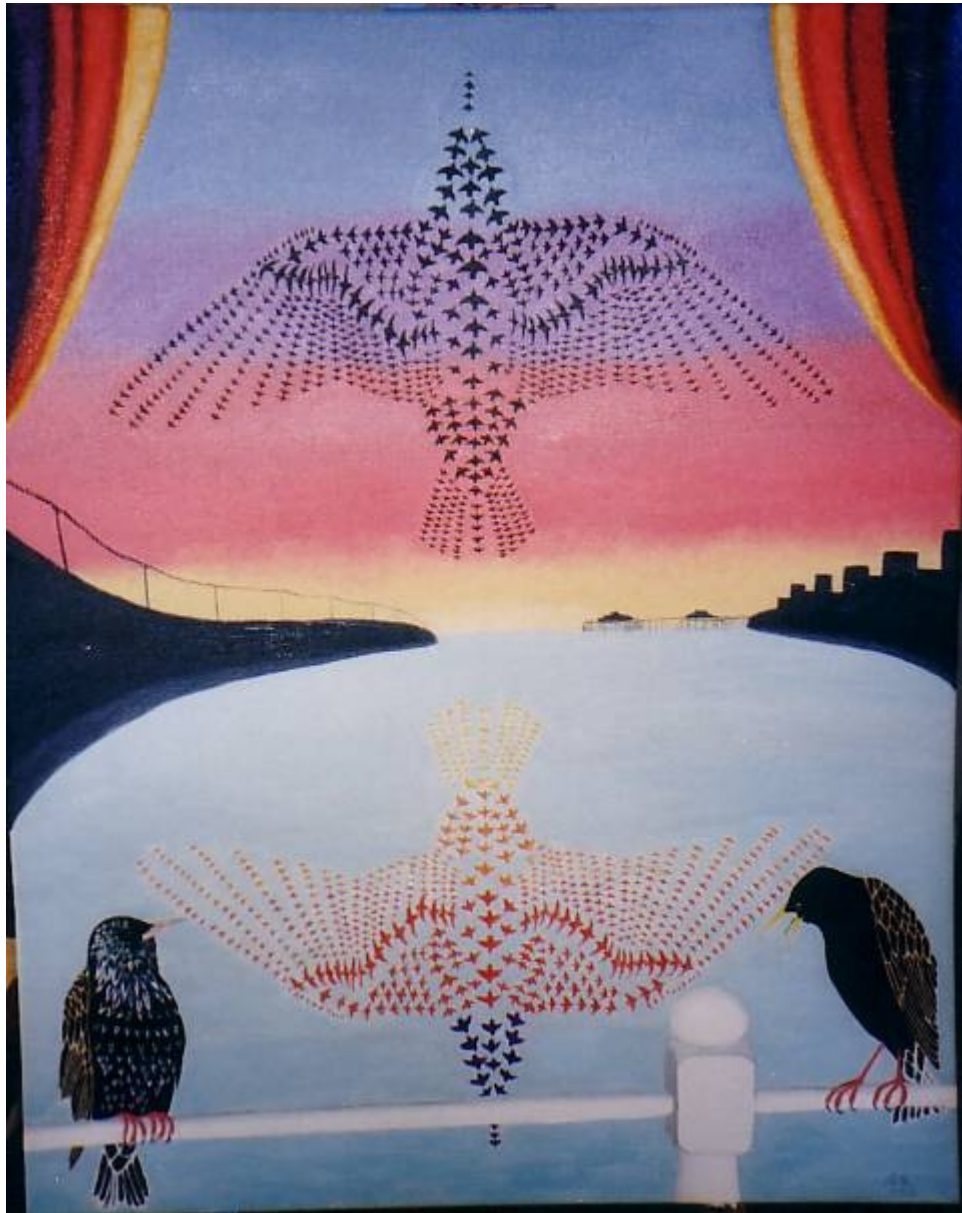
Reflected in Currents
Between Waves
Rippling Fenestration
Mercurial Shimmering

In Forming Invisible Spaces
Reminding of a Presence
Of Absence

Mimicking Human Machine Code
Along Telegraph Wires
In Subtle Mockery
Of Abstract Logic

Forever Finding Holes
In the Solid Geometry
Of Artificial Edifice

Black Iridescence
Penetrating the Riddles
Of Brick Walls
With Natural Fluidity



"Starlings", by Alan Rayner.

The Attractions of Becoming a Host

What I would like to be Most
Is a Well Coming Host
Raising a Toast
Without having to boast

To All those I love Best
From East and West
Providing a Nest
Where Each Can Rest

Assured in the Knowledge
Acquired in College
That Open Invitation
Is the Heart of a Nation

An Inductive Place
With Scope for Grace
Inspiring
Expiring

In Dynamic Relation
A Consolation
That whatever Gives Out
In a Roundabout
Way
So They say
Can only Come Back
Without any lack

But, I don't have a Ghost
Of becoming a Host
Unless I can Succour

All Manner of *****

And I'd rather Not
In case I might Rot
And I want to Delay
When I'm due to Decay
By Fending Off
All Those who might Scoff

So, Now I'm Alone
I need to Atone
For my Lack of Friends
In a World with no Ends

Statuesque and Immortal
Without Any Portal
To Where I so long
To Be Where I Belong

Within the Sea
Of Eternity
Beside the Hills
Where Every We
Expresses Me
A Host of Golden Daffodils



'The Attractions of Becoming a Host' (Oil painting on canvas by Alan Rayner, 2004).

IRISH INCLUSION

A Lyrical Travelogue

Context

What is it about us that needs first of all to 'go away on holiday' and then to find a way of recording it for 'posterity', whomever that might be? Some strange cocktail of escapism with security that epitomizes our bodily lives caught in the middle between material attachment and soulful liberation, home and away, safe and adventurous. Why can't we just 'let it all flow', without recourse to the discourse of memory on which feed the commercial paraphernalia and tacky trappings of the tourist industry? What is this hang-up we have for permanence that in its dull imposition upon our life experience simultaneously inspires our mortal longing to get away from it all, whatever the risk, whatever the cost, again and again?

Perhaps this really is what is so vital to the learning experience of our creative human nature – living with the uncertainty of space in our midst whilst holding it both within and out of bounds: exciting but frightening, harmonious but becalmed. The trouble starts when we cease to hold our excitements and confinements together in dynamic reciprocal balance. When we pit one against the other, obliging ourselves to choose, this way or that, or even, with deep inconsistency, this way as the *means* to that. Then, the spirit suffers, in one way or another, trapped in nostalgia or painfully exposed.

So, how then to hold on to our spirit of adventure, whilst not losing the plot? How to make a record without getting stuck in the groove? How to let go without forever abandoning our learning experience?

This dilemma may explain how it is that when we try literally to *capture* our experience on film, in tape-recordings, in personal journals, in our descriptions to others or even simply within our own memory circuits, some essential quality of the initial live encounter dies irreplaceably. Nothing can substitute

for the original. It cannot be transferred, lock, stock and barrel from one place to another. Those photographs we took all look disappointingly *flat*. Somehow all those unpredictable, sometimes painful, spatial intrusions that we *felt* in the moment, bringing an electric sense of relief to our experience, get smoothed out by our recollections or our revisits. To misquote Heraclitus, we can never step in the same river twice without the river losing all its excitements and seeming, well, boring. Unless, somehow, we can *evoke* the spirit of the first encounter, not by confining it behind closed doors, but by holding it open to its attendant uncertainties. We need to *recreate* rather than *reproduce* it, by finding a way to *play* with our memories, keeping them young, just as sex plays with genes as it refreshes the world with its offspring, providing room for evolution.

So, as my wife, Marion, and I set out for our holey days in Ireland, I wondered how I might play with my memories of the experience. I decided to play with words. On each day, I would try to write at least one poem. That seemed in keeping with the spirit of the place.

Day 1

Marion and I took flight from Bristol to Dublin, then drove in a hire car, with me anxiously at the wheel, through what was at first horribly heavy traffic, to Kilkenny. Our hotel room proved to be stiflingly hot, without air conditioning, after a recent heat wave (funny how our holidays so often seem to *follow* or *precede* a heat wave!). But we were told not to open the windows because of the possibility of insects flying in from the nearby river.

Overheating

Space seeps from outer to inner
Through pores that gasp for refreshment
Of an expanding body
That swelters in the still air
Of a night sealed off
From the relieving breeze
Of a world beyond thick curtain linings
Draped across windows barely opened
For fear of insects breeding
In the humidity of the river's slow meander

Let me out, let me out!
The trapped space cries
From within the burning body
Whose pores respond
By gaping open further still
Only to let more heat in
From the enveloping furnace
As the body swells relentlessly
In the brooding darkness

Water! Water!
The body yearns to slake its thirst
By drawing out the dense invading dryness
Of its cramped, stagnating form
In a cooling evaporative surface
A cloud set sail in elemental air
Shrinking back from the ghost
Of its movement above a temperature
Far removed from norm.

At last day breaks open the windows
As their curtains are withdrawn
To bathe the restless body
Still aching sorely from the night
In piercing shafts of bright sunlight
The body lifts its weary spirits
Aware of its need to face the day
And takes a shower.

Day 2

Marion's birthday begins with a crisis as her camera fails, due, it transpires, to exhausted batteries. With snap-happiness restored, we wander through the medieval streets, Castle, Abbey and Cathedrals of Kilkenny, as well as its shopping precincts and pubs.

Hot Foot

The town awaits the expectant tourist
Its many attractions lined up sweetly
Along cobbled streets set out to test
The endurance of shoe leather
Prepared to beat the sudden onslaught
Of any kind of unkind weather

And so the busy tramp begins
To wander curious round every corner
In search of wonders to fill full
That strange, beguiling inner craving
That sends feet stalking over paving
From here to there but sadly never
Quite revealing everywhere

The quest begins deep in the silence
Of ancient modern Cathedral spaces
Juxtaposed with shopping precincts
Each vying to receive the instincts
That long to find some thing elusive
They can take back to show
The world where they have been

Onwards, onwards, drive the feet
As goods and services fail to meet
Demands for yet more inside knowledge
Captured on film if not in memory
Aided and abetted by eager tour-guides
And endless word-strewn museum passages
Filled with every manner of device
To rest assured the empty mind

Hotter, hotter, fit to blister
Strive the feet with every stride
To satisfy that need for pride
With spirit flagging on the flag stones
At last they find a place to step aside
From the beaten track
A chance to rest and reflect with pleasure
Upon a day designed for leisure.

Day 3

Marion and I drive down to Waterford, but feel disappointed by the sparseness of rewarding places to see or visit amidst noisy traffic. We drive south to Dunmore East, an active fishing port with large numbers of kittiwakes inhabiting the cliffs.

Kittiwake Harbour

A strange recalling
Half-familiar, half unfamiliar cry
Seagulls crossed with cat
Whirring and wheeling above pea-green inlets
Into red rock banded in classical zones
From thongweed and kelp
Through barnacles to spiral and channel wrack
Then tar and orange lichen
Until, nesting in holes
Sprayed beneath by their own encrustations
Young and old crowded together
With diagonal wing stripes and soft, snowy heads
They sound off into the air

An exuberance of noise
Shrill between wing-beats
Rising and fading in turns
As unseen currents
Hidden beneath calm surface
Softly slaps hard rocks
In living reprimand
For their intrusion
Like slivers into silvered space
Cutting with their serrations

But all the while
Eroding into lesions
To which the kittiwakes return

Day 4

We travelled from Kilkenny to a hotel a few miles west of Galway on the Connemara coast. I felt full of expectations of a restful stay and seeing beautiful sea and landscapes, but after a promising misty then sunny start, the weather became increasingly overcast and moist, and the television brought news of attempted bombings in London.

Shades of Grey and Blues

Sun-kissed mist lifts
Out of sorts
Hoping to see sea
Blue sprinkled lightly
Beyond unsightly
Ruminations
Of gloomy nations
Holding hard
To patriotic certitude
No room for doubt
To cast a clout
Anticipating summer weather

But fret frets and sidles
Along salted margins
Where grey sea wormwood mingles
Amidst the shingle
With Ramalina sprawling fruticose

Upon hard rocks
Rounded but unfounded
On any basal instincts
Submerged below ground
Out of view

Soon drizzle begins to gravitate
Into a harder kind of fall
Precipitating retreat from the foreshore
Scurrying for shelter
From cold shivers driving inwards
Through clothing sadly lacking
Insulation from without
To protect the soul within
Forever seeking warmth

A switch is pushed for reassurance
Of news about the world out there
That can distract from fears in here
But the stories are of detonations
Trying to ignite a human fire
In minds terrorized by desire
To find themselves safe haven
From nightmares in the mire

But the bog is itself a blanket
Of wetness turned to peat
A place where flowering nature
Erupts in purple patches
The colours of the heath
That coat the mountains and the moorlands
Which relieve the greys and blues
From their attraction to depressions

Day 5

Marion and I have a splendid, unexpectedly warm, windless and dry day amidst the innumerable lakes as well as mountains, bogs and false coral strands of Connemara. On a short walk beside the 'Roundstone', we find St Daboec's heath, a purple bell-flowered plant that grows nowhere else in the British Isles.

Mirror Views

Black silver mirrors
Reflecting skywards
Inset within boulder-dashed moorland
Peaty pools, flat calm
With mountains inverted within

A dozen upturned basins
Grey-flanked, green-rimmed
Subtending orange-fringed bays
Knotted wracked
With straggling swirls
Floating out into quiet swells
Until around the corner
Come coral strands
Golden merging into white
Knobbly twiglets up close to
And then, around the bend
Verging towards Roundstone
Purple bells of St Daboec's Heath
Greet knowing eyes.

Day 6

A slightly frustrating day, wanting to relax and not drive too far but not finding anywhere to settle, impeded by intermittent heavy rain and tourist-unfriendly Irish sign-posting, but eventually finding a peaceful setting in a beautiful bay not far from where we set out.

Soft Strandings

A depression passes through overnight

Leaving in its wake

An uncertain window of sunlight

We travel out along the coast road

Looking for islands

Connected by causeways

Imagining who knows what idyllic scenes

But are greeted by rockscapes

With no particular place to go

Or stay

And strange sounds and smells of industry

With houses strewn around

Prosaic outposts in the most remote locations

Familiarity contemptuous of unfamiliarity

Somehow careless, yet caring deeply

Offhand without so much as a welcoming sign

Or roadside lay-by

So we carry on

Still searching

For some more obvious way

To spend the day

Far in the distance
A white strand beckons
Here, shorely, we can rest aside
From the busy creepy-crawl of traffic

But no, there are no vacancies here
Only a vacant moistland
Receding to distant sea
With boulders bearded with Neolithic wrack
Almost gaudy in their ginger tones
Set against the blank canvas of the strand
Where rotting hulks of boats and yards
Declare themselves 'Private'

And, as if to add to the lacking hospitality
Dark scuds of cloud roll in
From what had seemed like distant broodings
To deliver their soft loadings
And send us scampering back for dryness
Within the metal that brought us here
Against the flow

So, no there's nothing for it
But to return to whence we came
And as we reach our journey's beginning
Spread in front of us, as if grinning
Is a delightful sandy bay
Where terns are crying if not singing
Here, is where you could have spent the day

Day 7

We travel from Connemara cross-country to the outskirts of Dublin, stopping off to visit remarkable monastic ruins at Clonmacnoise, overlooking an elbow in the River Shannon set between glacial eskers. I felt moved by the bloody history of the place.

From West to East

To travel from wild to tame
As the body lies
A church in grave repose
Head over heels
Broken ruins
Screaming of the heartbreak
Of peaceful endeavour
To farm, build and learn
To raise families
Only to attract jealous regard
And desire to pillage
What threatens egotistic piety
Holding itself closer
To Being Almighty
A divine hypocrisy
Ready to declare its right
To sever all it deems
Beyond its savage orthodoxy

But still, here
Beside Shannon's elbow
Raised upon an esker
Above the sinking ground
Remains a quiet testimonial
Bleakly windswept

To earnest spirit

High-crossed with purpose
Rebuilding upon rebuilding
A huddle of sacred spaces
Still centres of attraction
Long after their final fall

Abused by Victorian picknickers
Oblivious of how they echo
So many ancient tragedies
Repercussions of ignorance
Of other lives
That find their modern counterpart
In the news of every day

So, as we gaze upon these broken bodies
Can we hear what they might share
Through the eloquence of their silence
And their roofless walls stripped bare
Of any semblance of pretension
About a way in which to care
For a human spirit fearfully aching
For a place to rest in peace

Day 8

We visited the renowned Neolithic burial mounds at Knowth and Newgrange, believed by many today to be an expression of 'sun-worship'. I was taken by the remarkable rock-art, which seemed to me to have as much to do with water flow forms as sun, and by the behaviour of sand martins nesting in the mounds at Knowth. The birds were flying in and out of holes they had made just above the concrete rim that had been constructed to protect the kerb stones around the margin of the main mound. I was also struck by the reconstructed quartz façade at Newgrange, the product of a modern archaeologists 'imagination'.

Sand Martins at Knowth

All around, just above the rim
Are entrances to the mound
Holes for entry into dark chambers
Spaces for the rebirth of the living
Fringing the periphery
Not the dead centre
Where east, light and right
Are given precedence
So it seems
Over west, darkness and left

Is this how we began
Eye wonder
To deflect our close attention
From where we want to hide
Those places where no light can penetrate
Except at definite times
Where certainty can at last prevail
At the beginning and end of the day

Our guide shows us concentric circles
Etched in ancient stone
She asks what abstract meaning
Such symbols might imply
She sees the sun within
I see ripples in the water
So is this worship of the Sun God
Or love of fisherman's daughter?

Who can tell what lies beyond our ken
Where no sound issues between now and then
But meanwhile the bird soul singers
Rent the air waves with their shrieks
As they enter into darkness
And fly out again

Quartz Façade

Quartz, bright, white and glistening
Like some Ancient Mariner's moustache
Peppered with granite marbles
Guards the Neolithic portal
To the miracle inside

A carbon-dated buccal cavity
Older than Stonehenge
Lined by huge rock-teeth
Etched with zigzags, lozenges
And trispirals
Enduring cruciate trinities
Captured in Shamrock leaves
From 3200 years BC

The eye of light
Crossed through with spatial darkness

So, is that moustache truly ancient?
Or some modern self-deceit
A victory over darkness
Or a symbol of defeat
By some other hidden entrance
Embedded in deep heat
Once known, but now no longer
Felt as incomplete

Day 9

My birthday. We travel through the Wicklow Mountains to the valley of two lakes, Glendalough, where there are ancient monastic remains associated with the hermit, St Kevin.

Birthday Cake

We approached cautiously
Along a lakeside road
Strewn with loose chippings

Then began a long, slow climb
To the Wicklow Gap
Where a corrie lake glistened
Beyond the hermit's path

Then, down into the valley
Scooped out by glacial ice
Forming a rounded bottom
For deep, peaty lakes

Fed by cascading streams
Plunging down the sides of the trough
Until brought sharply down in speed
To spread alluvial fans
Through water weed
And so give birth
To densely wooded carr
Of birch and willow
Giving way along the slopes
To twisted beams of pine and oak

Here, nestling down amongst the trees
Sprouts a crowd of ancient holey ruins
Surrounding a pointed candle tower

All along the channels in these ancient walls
Between the blocks of hard-edged rock
Used for their construction
Maidenhair spleenwort
Spreads its starfish fronds
Green fountains springing out
Along the grooves they have discovered

How strange it seems that all this crowd
Should so aspire to stand out proud
Above the tumult of the fissures
Where dark space pools the flowers together
Along the ridges where the water divides
To flow either this or another way

And leave the dry, jutting edges bare
Where the harsh, bright light can glare
 Burning the soft, organic flesh
That gives the living pause to care

A Dog Called Insecurity

Insecurity dogged his every footstep

Forever biting at his heal

Despite his feigned indifference

In his attempt to shield

His inner softness

From the remorseless field

A disciplined performance-training

To leap whatever expectations

Were placed as hurdles in his way

Where nothing less could be accepted

Than his assignment to category A

A one-eye wonder

Straining purpose

From his selection of the day

A singular restraining moment

From relaxation in the hay

Where can this lead?

He often pondered

Amidst the tension of intolerance

Barking fretfully at his accord

Until at last a sound of silence

Frayed the edges of his sword

A Natural Inclusion?

God here!
Nature by Name
Divine by Nature

I have been growing concerned
About My Son
Alan
Poor
Anxious
Foolhardy
Soul that he is

Every day
Risking the Furies
By trying to give Me
A form of expression

That all my sons and daughters
You seekers of my Wisdom
Can Understand

Now that you have locked me
Outside of myself
As a distant Object
That you seek to value
As worth more or worthless
Whilst exerting Force
From nowhere

Can you imagine how it feels
In this exclusion zone
To be forced to observe

The sorrowful sight
Of My diverse expressions
Beating Hell
Out of Each Other?

Each fondly imagining
Their solid free agency
Secure in their own World
Of Paradox

A plurality of indifference
To their human need
For what I offer
In the pool of their evolving possibility

Each obstructing
By abstracting
Their concrete point selves
From loving, my influence

In the very Act
Of looking for where I am
To be Found
Whilst passing by
The silence in front of their noses

In tormented cacophony

Perhaps I can catch them
By surprise
Slipping in beneath their Guard
Just when they are least expecting
To find me?

In a place
Where the heart is no whole
No singularity
Of defined independence

But receptively responsive
To what flows
Both within
And without
Our Knowledge

Achilles Heal

A gap breathed space
Into the fortress
Of a soul walled in
By dreaming of Absolute security
In its individual completeness

Elevated above some baseline standard
Of soles firmly planted
At odds with one as another
In foundations of quicksand
Set fast in cement

How quickly this dreaming
Would fade
In less than a lifeline
Of certain anchorage

When doubt made its fearful question
Of presence felt
In a blow below the belt
That crippled unbending fixture
Into sharply wrought relief

Curved into some new and ancient
Awareness
Where no One could still compete
When stilled by its own completeness
Of idolized concrete

Inviolable to all but its own violation
Of unfelt presence
So deeply disconcerted

By no sense of nonsense
In the absence of its motherhood

Through which to find communion
From sole to soul
Unblockaded
By proud pretension

A humility restored
To Faith in individual failure
As sure and omnipresent sign
Of love in human nature

Opening all ways
To unending Recreation
In the very Shadow of Tragedy
The Community Play of Foolish Genius

Beyond restrictive lessons
In Schools of Guilty Thought
That burden the bleating Heart
With endless ways to blame and shame
By reserving the right for One Alone
To claim superiority



'Loving Error' (Oil painting on board by Alan Rayner, 1998).

Best Kept Secret

How hard it can be
To feel the softness inside
With no hard core axis
Of stiffened resolution
Fixed in motion
All around

Walls of incomprehension
Elaborate facades
Guard the holes
Unaware of their own holeyness
That I can see through
To darkness beyond wit

But those same walls
Confine my secret
Longing to burst forth
Into the wider world
Where eye can make sense
Of invisible yearning

A lens
No more and no less
Of mortal curvatures
Concave and convex
That bring into focus
The hole of everywhere
That fear seeks to fill
With concrete

A spoke in the wheel

Of revolution
But in that convolution
Of right-minded belief
In supernatural force
Is paradox born

We may have free will
But who can free wheel
When all around
Deaf walls resound
To force life under ground?

Beyond Objectification

You ask me who you are
To tell a story you can live your life by
A tail that has some point
That you can see
So that you no longer
Have to feel so pointless
Because what you see is what you get
If you don't get the meaning of my silence
Because you ain't seen nothing yet

You ask me for illumination
To cast upon your sauce of doubt
Regarding what your life is all about
To find a reason for existence
That separates the wrong
From righteous answer
In order to cast absence out
To some blue yonder
Where what you see is what you get
But you don't get the meaning of my darkness
Because you ain't seen nothing yet

You look around the desolation
Of a world your mined strips bare
You ask of me in desperation
How on Earth am I to care?
I whisper to stop telling stories
In abstract words and symbols
About a solid block of land out there
In which you make yourself a declaration
Of independence from thin air
Where what you see is what you get

When you don't get the meaning of my present absence
Because you ain't seen nothing yet

You ask of me with painful yearning
To resolve your conflicts born of dislocation
From the context of an other world out where
Your soul can wonder freely
In the presence of no heir
Where what you see is what you get
When you don't get the meaning of my absent presence
Because you ain't seen nothing yet

You ask me deeply and sincerely
Where on Earth can you find healing
Of the yawning gap between emotion
And the logic setting time apart from motion
In a space caught in a trap
Where what you see is what you get

And in a thrice your mind is reeling
Aware at last of your reflection
In a place that finds connection
Where your inside becomes your outside
Through a lacy curtain lining
Of fire, light upon the water

Now your longing for solution
Resides within and beyond your grasp
As the solvent for your solute
Dissolves the illusion of your past
And present future

Now your heart begins to thunder
Bursting hopeful with affection

Of living light for loving darkness
Because you ain't felt no thing yet



'Holding Openness' (Oil painting on canvas by Alan Rayner, 2005).

Channel Number Five

Come on you Two
Won't you fuse with us Three
So that we no longer have to be
Rivals?

In an Olympic Golden Sovereignty
Of One on either side of offence
That makes you over
Into binary opposition

An oddly singular couple
Of thrust and counter-thrust
In action and reaction
That denies the even handedness
Of your giving and taking
To and from each
Receptive and responsive influence

A tidal flow that empties
As it fills and fills
As it empties
In a chord with circumstantial need
To keep a breast

In tune with Mother
Who can give
No more than she can provide
If she is to sustain her sustaining
Identity of one in All and all in One
A world with out end
In which none can begin
Without being taken in
Amend



Channel Number 5' (Oil painting on canvas by Alan Rayner 2007).

Child of Reason

I feel I cannot think
Of My Self alone
As wise
For there can be no wise One alone

I am not wise
I am a child of suffering
Whose childful yearning
Is to lighten the load
Imposed by those who goad
Us on our way
By means of fearful refutation
Of all that they might seek to find

I cannot grow up
For in that adulteration
I encounter devastating poverty
A desertion of the spirit
That pools us all together
In the recreative communion
Of our natural neighbourhood

Can our rational pursuit
Serve any better purpose
Than to chase what we seek
Further
And further
and further
Away?

If we were only to loosen

Those unforgiving means and ends
The hardline limits of denial
By which we close down on our prey
We could release the life that loves
Our child's play



"Panda", by Alan Rayner

Don't Call Me Clever, Stupid!

I am sick
And tired
Of stupidity
That calls itself clever

That sits back on its haunches
Wearing a Cheshire Cat Grin
Whilst all around
Fades into background

A nowhere to be seen
Above the din
Of that Great Fat Cat's
Original sin

A stupidity
That makes its point
By killing joy
Within a full stop
That begins and ends All
In infinitesimal instant

A story going nowhere fast
But is sure to last
On and on and on and on
In that glimmer of light
That banishes night

From its back projection
Of frozen frames
Kick-started and stopped
In a brutal moment

Oh, how I yearn for the point
That wakens the night
From the land of fright
And rolls love back
Into the loop

Where all is in One
And one is in All
So all can recall
How before the Fall
Love was the point
That made love around all

A point where joy
Could be nurtured, not killed
By those so free-willed
As to think they are clever
A cause, in effect
With no pause to reflect

You may think yourself clever
If you think I'm a fool
But I'm not stupid
Because I'm not clever!

Thirty-Something

19/7/06

On a day when Marion
Becomes fifty-something
A whole year older
Than the day before

You know the score
As temperatures soar
Beyond previous heights
Recorded in mercurial columns

Confined in fixed capillaries
Of impermeable glass
Not the expanding veins
Of fritillaries beating
The hot air above the grass
Of a sun-beaten day

When thirty-something
Lies beyond the benchmark
Of normality
On which standard life depends
A flagpole set within concrete
Grounds for complaint
Concerning the lack of restraint
That keeps within the bounds of comfortable security

What are these measures
That rule our expectations?
Why should we fit
Within their constraints
Of lines crossing paths

That isolate past from future

As if the present only exists

In infinitesimal instance

Where there is no room for fluid flow

Where life flutters by and stutters

In fits and starts

Of wholes divided into parts

Where ends are reached

By any means

Can there be no other story

Than this historical collapse

Of future into past?

Maybe the opening's

In the end of closure

Where certainty gives way

To ever present possibility

**Dales Diary – Remembrances of a holiday in the Yorkshire
Dales, September 2006**

Pouring 1/9/06

A landscape that pours
Water falling over hard edges
 Dwelling in pools
 Rushing in glassy ridges
 Past the fixing eye
That holds it caught in currents
That crystallize into sugary outbursts
 Of white noise
Collecting themselves together
 Into green velvet blankets
That smooth over hidden fractures
 Bristling with soft rush
 In soggy passages
Where butterwort enfolds
 Fleeting insect particles
 In sticky embrace
 Readied for flowering
And seeding receptive spaces
 Along with countless others
 Gathered in swards
 Raised not in anger
But bursting with overlooked yearnings
 To return what fell in droplets
 As feathered messengers
 Into swirls of atmosphere
 That loosen landscape
 So it pours

White Scar 2/9/06

Blunt looks survey
The group of cagooled intruders
Huddled at the entrance
Where cold rinsed air
Funnels through the gap
Adjoining two holes

Eyes are downcast
At a pair of high heels
Quite unsuitable for exploration
Along walkways of meshed metal
Over white water
The woman and her family
Are sent packing

The rest are drawn inwards
Into a realm of drips and oozes
Turning slowly into stone
Fashioned into sticks and straws
Mounds and curtains
With fanciful names

They walk along passages
That squeeze and hunch
Their fleshy frames
Into grotesque apings
Of those at which they stare

Emerging at last into the great chamber
That pioneers have scuffed and bruised
Enslimed to find
Emboldened by a sense of destination

Beyond bus-sized boulders
Fallen from roof
To crazed mud floor
With prehistoric cracks
To stop you in your tracks

The lights are switched to ultraviolet
To reveal a scene no film can capture
Of drooping spines in sharp relief
Signalling our return to where we entered
As water levels are sharply rising
From the falling clouds outside

As we pass beyond the huddle
Patiently waiting for their turn to come
Including a woman with her family
Now shod as they should be
The voice that sent them packing
Once already
Calls out in earnest proclamation
No more tours today
The water's rising fast

Torrents 2/9/06

Curtains falling onto velvet
Saturate the fabric
Of the ground
Beyond its capacity for retention
Below the surface of each mound

Streams that yesterday
Simply glided past their cuttings
Now raise the hackles
Of their profile
Above the parapets
That hid their slithering
Smoothly serpentine bodies
Within their burrows

Snakes becoming dragons
Burst ferociously upon the land
Engulfing All that falls within reach
Of their ever-widening, deepening mouths

A dragon crosses the road in front of us
Intent on stalling our adventure
Beyond the confines of discretion
On such a rainy day

Marion puts her foot down
The dragon flies aside
Cut briefly apart
Into rising sprays of water
Before rejoining head and tail
To roar a warning to
Whoever next

Should dare to cross its path

On the way home

Blue Sky Over Hardraw Force 4/9/06

The map misleads
Suggesting the Force
Is where it is not
Amidst a swirl of heavy mist
Disguised as rain
That masks and unmasks
Craggy features
On the hills above
As we consume lunch
Waiting for a break

We decide to go for it
Donning cags and overtrousers
I ask some passers by
Where are the Falls?
Directly along that path
One points and smiles

We follow the path
That descends over steep hillside
Meeting a group of Canadians
Who tell us the way
Is not as we'd thought
But through the Green Dragon

At last we pay our way
And find the path
Which leads to cacophony
A hurtling descent
Thick and heavy
Explodes into spectrumed spray

We creep alongside
Wary of slippery rocks
And stare through leafy canopies
At where the descent appears to spring
From the middle of a crescent
Of deep blue sky

Muker's Aftermath 4/9/06

What they call the Butter Tubs
Are deep ravines
Holes sunk in hillside
From where a vast vista
The Dale of the Swale
Opens out ahead

At Muker we pause
Amongst dwarf church and buildings
Before crossing rich meadows
That lead to a bend
In the fast flowing river

Then it's back for tea
With old peculiar cake
And cheese
Before taking the high road
That returns to Ashrigg

A road with a view
That's best seen from a bench
Until a sharp gust
Takes us aback

Malham Tour 4/9/06

An ancient ash
Signals the way
Its heart hollowed
Its trunks split
Yet its base arches up
And its roots unfold
Boulders in a clawed grip

Janet's Foss, wide and white
Cascades over hidden tufa
Whilst the white of a dipper
Wriggles like a worm
As the bird preens
Its darkly invisible presence

Then out along gentle
Much trodden stripe
Of white against green
To a deep gash
Filled with the noise of splash
The rumbles of the tumbles
That end in a clutter
Of rocks in blocks

Now over green
To a pavement of clints and grykes
No place for careless pedestrians
Where to tread in the gaps
Means more than the bad luck
Of falling between two stools
But a sharp descent
Into a smiling mouth

Which bares its teeth
For all to see
And clamber amongst its cavities

Erratics and Horse Mushrooms 6/9/06

Giant blockheads
Thrust over a rock
More permeably receptive
Now supporting their superior weight
On fragile columns
Underpinning overbearing odds
Like virgins dwarfed by Goliaths
Unable to escape
The pressure imposed from above
Yet in their servitude
Expressing a nobility
Far deeper
Than what claims a superficial dominion
Whilst reliant for support
Above the ground whose gravity
Would swallow them whole

Down in the dale
Out of view of the boulder field
A more proportionate communion
Rises in clusters
From short grass
Horse mushrooms on parade
Ballooning pallid
To disperse their spores
Before consuming eyes
Become consuming mouths

Exceptional Geology 6/9/06

Mossy fringes
Top rock strata
Inclined, anticlinal, synclinal
Inverted, fractured and broken
Pressed up against the fault line
Where the constricted rush
Relaxes suddenly into unforeseen breadth
Where oak and birch
Are elevated onto hillside
Nursing multicoloured flushes
Of russulas, leccinums and lactarius
Erupting from the changed soil
Heralding the upward thrust
Of ceps too inviting
To pass by uncollected

Digitalis

Oh, that iron fist that hides
In a velvet glove
Intoxicating the heart
Whilst ordering its erratic wanderings
Into the hard-edged metronomic beatings
Of a loveless marriage to mechanical objects
So clearly defined
To beguile the seeker of certainty

Could not that purple velvet
That flatters to deceive
Yet restore our child's play?

An antidotal, anecdotal softening
Of hard manipulations
That exclude the darkness from the day

Light touching lightly upon the fringes
Of etchings into clay
Where the bodies' soft life-linings
Can frolic in the summer hay



"Digitalis", by Alan Rayner

Let It Be – A Source of Unrest

When I find myself
In Times of Trouble
I long to share
What is on my mind

So that we can find
Some kind
Of common sense
That resolves the doubt
About what to do
About It

For to share is to care
In vulnerable fellowship
Recognising what bites
Holes in our security
Whilst allowing them to mend

But
I have come to find
That to speak about
One's troubled mind
Is thought unkind
In a world so defined
By the shallow insistence
Of soul responsibility
That It forces out
Any Shadow of doubt

To be welcomed inn
Demands that we sin
In single file

Or else be reviled
For whatever It is
That we cannot keep in
Beside ourselves

So I cannot amend
What I have to pretend
Does not concern me
I can only let it be
A source of unrest

Transfixed inside
Where I cannot tell
What harm it may bring
Until I'm told
And my blood runs cold
That I am to blame
For what I had to contain
All on my own because
The world didn't want to know
What on Earth my doubt
Was All about

Mocking Bird

Brick walls unite in solidarity
Or so I've heard
When their foundations
So absurd
Secured upon the very Word
That cuts their souls adrift
Feel the solvent waters
Lapping at their sound construction

I came across
One Such A Wall
Long and Straight
And Very Tall
Commanding the Waters
To Divide or Fall
And join the Ranks
Above It All

I tried to reason, softly
With the Wall
To allow some flecks a passage
Through its I
So that it could flex
In resonant communion
Of One World With Its Other
A mutually corresponding Identity
Incompletely defined

But my words rebounded

In mocking echo
A harshly edited reflection
Of my dejection
A judgement of scorn
Not gladly borne beyond
Into dynamic Synthesis

I saw a bird
Bestride the Wall
Glorifying in the Sunder
Of It All

Looking first this way
Then That
Preening its coat of many colours
Calling Out in strident language

Don't you know
You stupid Fool
That Love's reception is not cool
When this is what It is
To be or not to be
Where It's At

The bird's forked tongue
Flickered freely
As it cast its spell
Of false dichotomy
Upon the nature of its source
In all around

I heard a rumbling
Far below
Some undercurrent
Of the Flow
In swirling eddies
Round the pillars
That Underpinned
The Wall's hard lining

So that it began
To Quake
And crumple
Stirred Up
By the shaky ground

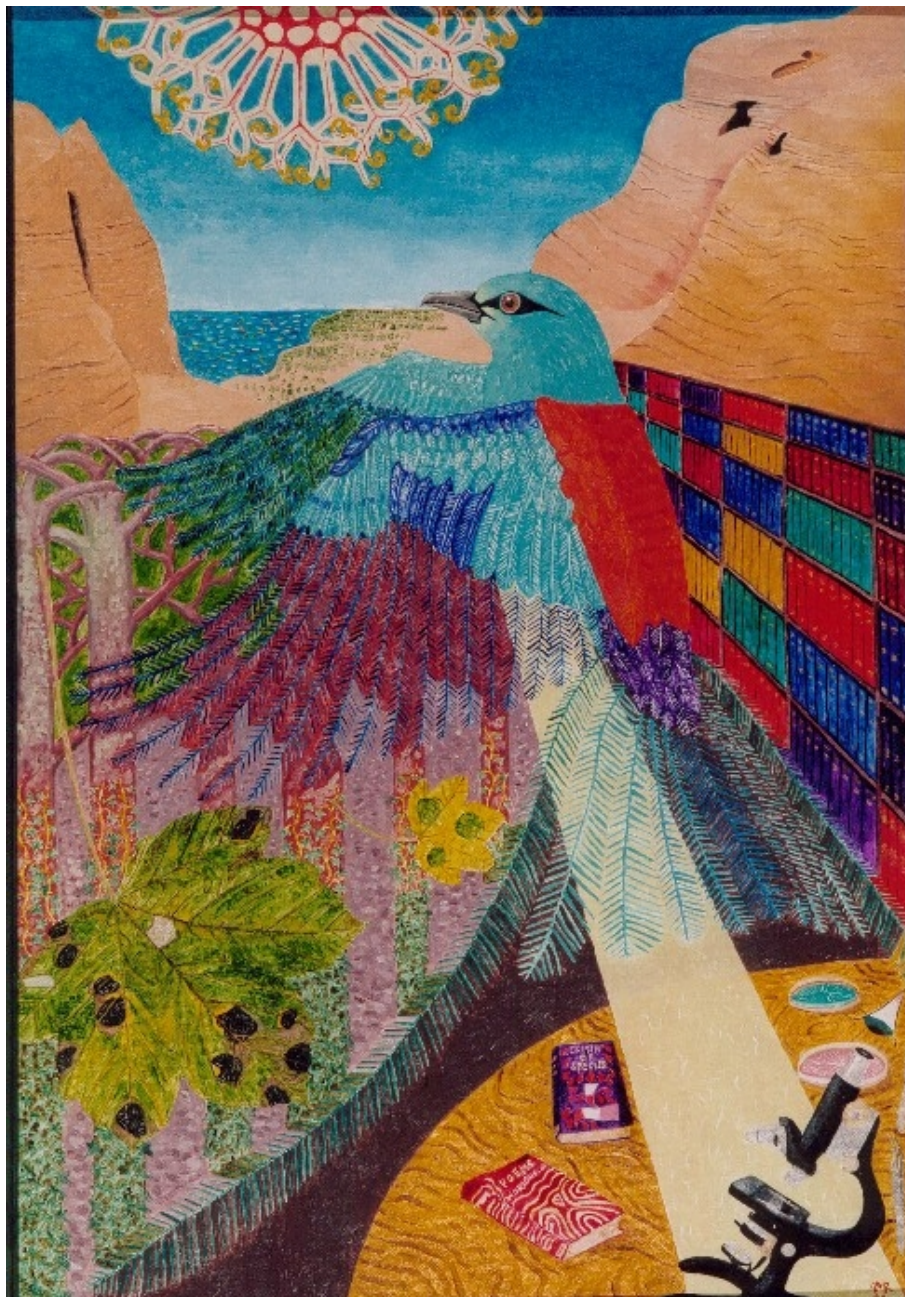
Alarmed
The bird took flight
Into the open sky
Beyond the Wall

It wheeled and spiraled
Above my head
Dancing on some unseen softness
That brought it safely back to ground

To pick its way
And feed on life released
Amongst the rubble

That once had stood
In the way of One World and Its Mother

Until I caught a glimpse of being caught
In its glassy eye's reflection
And found
At last
A sign
Of welcome
All mocking gone



'Roller Coaster' (Oil painting on board by Alan Rayner, 1998).

The Double Blind Double Bind

How Academic Orthodoxy Cannot Accept What It Needs to Accept to Make Sense

I will accept what you say if you can convince me to do so
For I am Fair and Open Minded
But to convince me you will have to show that I am wrong
When all I have to do
To be sure
Of my independent rightness
Is define what I am not
And have no need for further enquiry
Beyond the realm of my security

So I can wilfully
With Authority
Suppress the disquieting silence
Of your creativity
And be assured of the longevity
Of my double bog standards
Of excellent mediocrity

I have no need for receptivity
I can fix things for myself
For I am certain
Of my independence
Until you convince me otherwise
But then again I can be sure
That you're not me

Stuffed Tiger

I offered you a Tiger

Rampant
Roaring
Russet
Burning
Yearning
Gnawing
Yawning
Sprawling
Crawling
Puncturing
Eye Opening
Jaw Closing

You wanted to stuff the Tiger

Black, white and red all over
Darkness and Light
Reporting
Combining into Colour
And awesomely dynamic form

Inspiring
Expiring
Breathing
Space and
Fire

You wanted to put the Tiger in a Frame
To make the Tiger Tame

Complete with label warning 'Danger'

Safely Confined

In your High Security System

So you can Play your End Game

Harrowed Ground

The ground frowned
Its face shaved bare
From rich intertwinement
Of co-evolving variety
Nurtured Together
In receptive embrace

That bare faced lying
Now cut with lines of worry
Its inner life disturbed and severed
To make way
For a new breed of aliens

Arrayed in rank file
Aspiring skywards
In vertical ascent
With no messing around
Underground or overground

But where now is that strange new breed?
Smothered by weed
That takes the space
Vacated by greed
A forlorn, foregone conclusion
Laid low by dis-ease
Born of its intrusive planting



'Oashiss' (Oil painting on board by Alan Rayner, 1998).

I Don't Even Know Your Name

I don't even know your name
But why should that matter?
Does it stop me loving you?
Does it stop me needing you?
Does it stop my heart
Softening in your regard?

Do you need me to know you
As an object of my desire
For certain labelling
Do you need to be known to me
As other than I am?

Or is there room for doubt?
Of whose uncertain nature
I may yet be you and you be me
When all that's in a name

Is remembrance of our common neighbourhood
Together undefined
But recognisable
An aide-memoire

Momentary Clarity

A clarity of recall
In the sound of waterfall
A silence within droplets
That hang upon the sword
Of edgy clamour

On its way to rest
Amongst upright rush
And horizontal lily
With never a cross word
To disturb their repose
In pooled togetherness
Of reflective communion

Instilling peace without time
Pressing upon the spirit
Of one phase in each other
Creating a third note
With a fifth and infinite dimension

Repairing the damage
Of two-faced deception
In that bipolar declaration
Of disorder in community

Here, amongst the gossiping tulip trees
Who swear allegiance
To one word or another
Enabling conflict to bespoken
Over the music of their tears

Now, let's dance in joyful rhythm

An eightsome real
Of two resurrected to the power of three
Where one is a passage from nowhere

Not an idle momentum
Of dead point certainty
In monumental disregard
Concerning all that flows
Within and throughout
This vibrant tranquillity

Belonging only to a Life
That recalls with clarity
The all through one
And one for all
In corresponding triplicate
Without exception
Or deception

Seeing Through Appearances

You've caught me on the hop
Standing on One leg
Where All I can see
Is the gap
That stands
Between you and me
In splendid isolation

It makes me hopping mad
To be caught out in this way
Hooked on appearances
Where it's just not cricket
To be stumped on the boundary
Of my hook shot
Where my seeing ends

Surely I must be able
To drop my guard merely
To see you more clearly
Including in my framing
Not apart from my heart

Where we can sing together
In coupling chords of three
Where gaps don't distance
Our view of one including other
But find beneath the surface
Our evolutionary tree
Expressed outwardly through me
And yew in deep distinction
But never ending sea

Soft Life Lining

A soft life lining
With gentle relief
Some hard core denial
Of what lies beyond resolution
Across a bridge that sighs
Over sharp regrets
Submerged by shallow waters
Held at different levels
Suspended by artifice
Where the natural inclination
Is to tumble and flow
In keeping with the surface
That breathes from ground to air
And to ground from air
Where hidden from immediate sight
Is cavernous tumult
Silently shrieking disbelief
At wilful ignorance
Staring without regard
Whilst parading virtuosity
In Palladian splendour
Where all can see
Its raised male crest
Bestride the gentle hillside
That yearns to fall and rumble
Across the bridge that sighs

Spate Attack

I am a river damned to bursting point
Required by your close confinement
To down regulate my outflow
To a pitiful trickle
When I long to flood
And see you flailing in my excesses

Not because I want to drown you
But because I want to drown the din
Of your inconsideration
For what I can bring

To bear down upon your pallid protestations
Of exception from circumstance
That cruelly deny my loving influence
So that you can take one another apart
In death-defying leaps of soulless mentality
Into the hard ground of your unreality
Where life feeds the pungent corpse of your annihilation

No, I don't want to drown you
But how I yearn to see you swim
What a fine splash you'd make!

Pooled together in my liquidity
Taken up in common spirit
Where all resolve to solve is gone
Rendered needless by your oblivion
Of all that you have placed to stand in the way
Of your dearest, loving Mother

Tenth Time Around

Sound flows in ripples
Wrapping around some One
Enshrouding no One

But a deep bass tone
Of hollowed hand in love
With warm, dark silence

That melts the ice-cold light
Of thrilled soprano day
Into evening tenor
Awaiting alto dawn

A never-complete circulation
Of convexity in concavity
In spirited communion
Complementary coupling
Dancing life into form

Until time's betrayal
Of dark presence cut by knife
Into lifeless ration
On one side or another
Without compassion
In a cold light frame

Surely, now, it must
Be time to emit
A restoring kind of radiance
That smiles back into life
Its own admission
Of unclear conscience

Where doubt can play its part
In evolutionary art
Of perfect imperfection
In ever-forming flowing
Where sound ripples around
Our yielding, stiffening heart

The Holeyness of the Wood - West and East

Two, world's apart
Whose place is together
In common circumference
Of World spinning Story

One, the proud Standard-Bearer
Of light within darkness
An illumination
Of rectangularity
Held stiffly erect
With All in Order

The Other, a haphazard glimmering
Of darkness in light
A chaotic turbulence
Of fluid movement
Of Order in All

Wherein can be found meaning
Of vital significance
A Communion of holes
Each seeking relief
Obscured by the clutter
Of everyday Strife

Can we feel those holes
At the heart of souls
Or, must we make Shutters
To freeze the moment
Of objective vision?



"Holeyness of the wood: East", by Alan Rayner



"Holeyness of the wood: West", by Alan Rayner

Spheres of Influence

What can it mean?
To Hold not to Have
In endearing relationship
Without vacant possession

A place to create
Content
Without being contained
In solitary confinement

Where walls have ears
That listen through echoes
Of resounding interludes
Passing beyond
Limited recall

Into the Zone
Of overlap
That continually beckons
From first to last
And last to first

Without completion
That corners the spirit
To cower or fight
In a boxing ring

Where the Bell tolls
For the End of the Round
Where we run aground
Awaiting Return

From beyond the strand line
Where fighting spirit
Is no longer required
To stand its ground
And protect itself
From heedless abuse

But floats like a butterfly
On current unseen
Without will or wish
To sting like a bee
Upon bended knee

Forced into submission
By inalienable Right
Angled to Poise
Above its own light
Cast down below

Where love creeps away
Vowing to return
But not fight
Another day



"Spheres of influence", by Alan Rayner, 2007.

Tumbledown

Somewhere sparsely inhabited

A long stretch

Staring down at its heels

Alongside the crescent

That looks to see the sea

With a mouth at its back

And heads at its flanks

Gasping with white teeth bared

Or striped with green and red

Gashed with ochre

Flooding down slope

Carrying those uprooted

Along for the ride

Where they can only slide

Into an untidy heap

Without pride

On top of the ridge

Beneath the crest

Of fraught brow

That cannot let go

Without letting slip

What once it held

So insecurely in its grasp

Somewhere densely packed

With everywhere in clusters

Bedded into hillside

And standing out on pavement
Recoiling ancient memory
Wrapped around each present

Until prized out
By ardent hammer
Striking it rich
In shattered peace
That can't sit out a lifetime

Waiting
To gain acclaim for claiming
Possession for its owner
Above the humble crowd

That lies through aeons of silence
Until some ardent hammer
Strives to dig it out
And lay it bare

Abstracted from its deathbed
Where no one ceased to care
But held its breath for ages
Before gasping in fresh air
And dying yet again
As a museum piece



"Tumbletown", by Alan Rayner, 2008.